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OLD WORLD ART GOSSIP

The Municipal Art societies, which have for their object the beautifying of American cities, will hear with interest that no less an artist than Flameng has painted a sign-board for the Paris newspaper, *Le Matin*. Another well-known artist, Willette, has glorified the front of a Parisian cookshop with his work. One of the Paris newspapers suggests that an exhibition of antique sign-boards, or pictures of such sign-boards, might lead to an improvement in modern work. A warning note, however, is also sounded as to the tendency of shop signs and numbers to become unintelligible as they become artistic.

A member of the French Chamber of Deputies, M. Beauquier, who is also president of the Society for the Protection of Landscape, has introduced a bill taxing heavily all advertising signs along railway lines in France. Speaking for his society, he contended that railroads had already done harm enough to the beauties of nature. The railway, however, was a necessity, whereas the endless line of fences covered with chromatic abominations, advertising pills, automobiles, dyspepsia salts, corsets, hair-dyes, etc., hurt the eyes and debased the taste of ignorant people.

One of the French comic papers recently had a picture of a young peasant girl saying her prayers at a railway crossing before an advertising poster designed by Mucha, in his usual mediæval style, to glorify a certain brand of chocolate.

The opposition to the bill comes, naturally, from the peasants who own the fields in which the advertising companies want to plant their signs. They receive more money from such signs than from crops.

An autumn Salon is the latest suggestion in Paris. This is to be held, at a place to be hereafter named, at the end of October or the commencement of November, and is to be in no way a rival of the existing salons. Prevalent ideas are that it will be most liberal, for while, according to law, the executive board will consist of Frenchmen only, the jury, which will be elected by vote, will probably contain men of artistic repute of all nationalities.

There will be no awards, but an artist whose pictures have been accepted for five exhibitions, not necessarily in succession, will become a *Sociétaire*, and will have the right of exhibiting *hors de concours*.

This is an excellent idea, as it will in time be the means of abolishing cliqueism, the aim of the new society being to bring prominent artists of all classes to the fore, whether painters, sculptors, or engravers.

Under the direction of M. de Nolhac, the curator of the Palace of Versailles, a fine museum devoted to art work of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has been founded in that historic pile. Two new rooms under the famous gallery of mirrors have just been filled with objects rescued from the garrets and cellars of the palace, and opened to the public. Versailles is so enormous that even its custodians do not seem to have known of many of the treasures hidden away in obscure apartments that had not been opened for years.

Among the curious works recently installed are several pieces of historic furniture—a jeweled armoire with bronze work by Thomire, and a desk presented to Louis XVI. by Burgundy. Both pieces have been identified by means of old engravings and tapestries. On the desk has been placed a beautiful statuette of a child by Pigale, found in the garret. A still more remarkable find was of some statuary by the famous Houdon, which was dug out of the cellars, where it had been buried during the German occupation of 1871, and forgotten.

The Naples Museum has a scandal on its hands, and an art committee of inquiry appointed recently to investigate it resigned, in order to leave the courts to settle the matter. The main point at issue concerns the alleged disappearance of a magnificent piece of tapestry of priceless value, which a Roman expert, the Cavaliere Pietro Gentili, director of the Vatican Fabbrica degli Arazzi, swears he saw five years ago in a storeroom not open to the public, lying on the floor, while its companion piece (the Perseus) was hung from a rope drawn across the room. The existence of these is absolutely and energetically denied by the former administrators of the museum.

The king of Belgium recently opened a magnificent exhibition of early Flemish art arranged in the government buildings and the Grunthuus. Under the presidency of Baron Cruyn de Lettenhove, the committee persuaded the chief museums, churches, and private collectors of Belgium to lend their finest treasures.

There were many notable contributions from foreign countries, including about seventy from England. In the exhibition were thirty genuine Memlings, several Van Dycks, a great display of works by Gheerardt David, Petrus Cristus, Vandergoes, Bouts, Maburse, and many others not yet identified.

The antiques in the Grunthuus were scarcely less interesting. A catalogue of the pictures is being prepared by an Englishman, James W. H. Weale, who is accepted in Bruges as the foremost living authority. The exhibition will remain open until September.

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